

Cru (Christian organization)

Cru (known as **Campus Crusade for Christ** until 2011) is an interdenominational Christian parachurch organization for college and university students.^[1] It was founded in 1951 at the University of California, Los Angeles by Bill Bright

and Vonette Zachary Bright. Since then, Cru has expanded its focus to include adult professionals, athletes, and high school students. In 2011 Cru had 25,000 missionaries in 191 countries.^[2]

Cru



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| Formation | 1951 |
| Founders | <u>Bill Bright</u> and <u>Vonette Zachary Bright</u> |
| Type | Non-profit 501(c)3 organization |
| Headquarters | Orlando, Fla. |
| President | Steve Douglass |
| <u>Subsidiaries</u> | FamilyLife |
| <u>Mission</u> | Evangelistic Christian community |
| Website | <u>www.cru.org</u> |

**Formerly
called**

Campus Crusade for Christ
International

Cru relocated its world headquarters from Arrowhead Springs, San Bernardino, California to Orlando, Florida in 1991.^[3] The current president of the organization is Steve Douglass.^[4]

In 2011, Campus Crusade for Christ in the United States changed its name to Cru, to avoid the negative connotation of "crusade" from the historical Crusades (particularly to Muslim communities), and to reflect the fact

that much of the organization's work was no longer limited to college campuses.^[2]

History

Founded in 1951 at the University of California, Los Angeles by Bill Bright and Vonette Zachary Bright as a ministry for university students.^[5]

1972: Explo '72, a conference featuring evangelism and discipleship training, premiers in Dallas with 80,000 in attendance.

1974: EXPLO '74 premiers in Seoul, Korea, training 300,000 in evangelism and discipleship.

1976: Launched a \$1 million advertising campaign that featured ads and bumper stickers saying "I Found It!"^[3] along with an 800-number.^[6]

1996: Bill Bright is awarded the \$1.1 million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, and donates the money to promote the spiritual benefits of fasting and prayer.^[6]

2001: Steve Douglass succeeds at Bill

Bright as the president of organization.^[7]

The New York Times reported in 2011 that Cru has 25,000 missionaries in 191 countries.^[2]

On July 19, 2011, it was announced that Campus Crusade for Christ in the United States was changing its name to Cru in order to overcome existing barriers and perceptions inherent in the original name.^[2]

Ministries

Campus Ministry

Cru has active communities on 1,740 college and university campuses.^[8]

Athletes in Action

Athletes in Action works with athletes and coaches who compete at both the collegiate and professional level to use the platform of sport to help people around the world with questions of faith.^[9]

Among the events sponsored by Athletes in Action is the NFL-

sanctioned Super Bowl Breakfast^[10]
which features the presentation of the
Bart Starr Award "to honor the NFL
player who best exemplifies
outstanding character and leadership
in the home, on the field and in the
community."^[11]

Christian Embassy

Christian Embassy is an organization
for politicians and diplomats.^[12]

FamilyLife

In 1976, Cru began providing premarital and marriage seminars for its staff members and opened them to the public in 1978. Since 1976 more than 1.5 million people have attended marriage conferences.^[13] Today, approximately 100 "Weekend to Remember" conferences are held annually in almost every major city in America. FamilyLife offers multiple resources like The Art of Marriage, Stepping Up, LifeReady Woman, HomeBuilders Couples Series, HomeBuilders Parenting Series, Resurrection Eggs, and What God

Wants for Christmas.^[14]

FamilyLife president Dennis Rainey hosts the daily *FamilyLife Today* radio broadcast.^[15]

Inner City

Cru's inner city ministry (formerly known as Here's Life Inner City)^[16] currently trains and equips churches in 17 cities to meet immediate physical needs, while also providing long-term development programs such as Holistic Hardware for life skills and

WorkNet for career preparedness.^[17]

Global Aid Network (GAiN)

Global Aid Network (GAiN) is an humanitarian aid organization.^[18]

The Jesus Film Project

The Jesus Film Project started in 1981 to translate the Hollywood film *Jesus* into other languages so that it could be shown by missionaries to peoples around the world in their native languages.^[19]

The origins of The Jesus Film Project date back to 1945 when a young businessman named Bill Bright wanted to privately finance a film about the life of Jesus^[20] that was entertaining, biblically accurate, and which could be translated into non-English languages. Rather than making a film at that time, Bright went on to found a Christian ministry to reach college students called Campus Crusade for Christ in 1951.

In 1976, with Cru's influence spreading beyond college campuses to sports,

the marketplace and other aspects of society, Bright turned his attention once again to filmmaking. Hollywood producer John Heyman approached Bright to fund a project to put the entire Bible on film. The project would eventually be scaled back to just one book of the Bible, the Gospel of Luke, and be financed primarily by Campus Crusade supporters Bunker and Caroline Hunt^[21] for a sum of US\$6 million.

A team of 500 scholars and leaders from secular and Christian

organizations began to research historical elements for a film about Jesus. Filming took place over the course of several months throughout the Middle East.^[22]

Jesus was produced by John Heyman, and starred British Shakespearean actor Brian Deacon as Jesus, Rivka Neumann as Mary, Yosef Shiloach as Saint Joseph and Niko Nitai as Saint Peter.^[23]

Distribution in the United States has included direct mail campaigns

sponsored by churches to deliver a copy of the film to every address in select zip codes across the country.^[24]

Project leaders claim that it has been viewed over 5 billion times by over 3 billion people.^[25]

This claim has been greeted with skepticism by an evangelical leader.

Vinay Samuel, former executive director of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians has said: "These numbers are, to say the least, not gathered in a social-scientific way," and that "They have no way of

knowing this."^[25]

Publications

Cru publishes several books, booklets, and other materials for ministry. The Four Spiritual Laws booklet was authored by Bill Bright in 1952 and one hundred million copies have been distributed.^[26]

Fundraising

- Charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability^[27]

- Ranks #107 in fundraising efficiency^[28] among the top 200 U.S. charitable organizations, according to Forbes magazine (2007). Ninety-three percent of its funds go directly to programming, and 7% to overhead expenses.
- The top salary for any Campus Crusade employee was \$164,206 in the fiscal year ending 2011.^[29]
- In 1995, Campus Crusade for Christ was named the largest religious charity in the United States by U.S. News & World Report, with total

annual income of \$189 million.

- In 2008, Chronicle of Philanthropy^[30] ranks Campus Crusade for Christ No. 23 in private funding in its "Chronicle of Philanthropy 400," with annual giving of \$514 million.^[31]
- In 2012, Forbes ranked it #19 in its list of the largest charities in the United States, with a total revenue of \$519 million.^[29]

Worldwide presence

Cru operates under various names around the world:

- Africa - Great Commission Ministry or Life Ministry
- Australia - Power to Change
- Brazil - Movimento Estudantil Alfa e Ômega
- Canada - Power to Change Ministries
- Central America - Vida Estudiantil
- Colombia- Vida Para Colombia
- Europe - Agape
- Hong Kong - Campus Crusade for Christ
- Indonesia - Lembaga Pelayanan Mahasiswa Indonesia (LPMI)

- Korea - Crusade for Christ
- New Zealand - Tandem Ministries
- Post-Soviet European countries -
New Life

Partner

Josh McDowell Ministries

In 1964, Josh McDowell became a traveling representative of Cru addressing campus groups about the Christian faith. Over the years his ministry has focused on Christian apologetics, youth issues such as relationships and sexuality, and

international humanitarian aid.^[32]

McDowell's writings have concentrated on addressing challenges to belief, questions posed by non-Christians, doubts about faith, and non-Christian religions. The Christian magazine WORLD included McDowell's "Evidence That Demands a Verdict" in its list of the top 100 books from the twentieth century.^[33]

See also

- College religious organizations
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

- Fellowship of Christian Athletes

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Further reading

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External links

- [Official website](#)

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